

The

Call Letter

May 2021

Vol 47, #5



Richard Bixler, 1926-2021

The Northwest Vintage Radio Society

Post Office Box 82379
Portland, Oregon 97282-0379

The Northwest Vintage Radio Society is a non-profit historical society incorporated in the State of Oregon. Since 1974 the Society has been dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of "Vintage Radio" and wireless equipment.

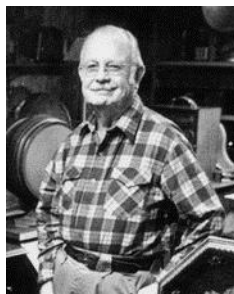
Membership in the Society is open to all who are actively interested in historic preservation. The dues are \$25.00 for domestic membership, due on January 1st of each year (prorated quarterly).

The Call Letter has been a monthly publication since 1974. It was originated with the founder, Bob Bilbie, and our first president, Harley Perkins. Through several editors and with the assistance of numerous society members, the Call Letter has continued to be a publication that informs members of the society's business and that supports the hobby of collecting, preserving, and restoring vintage radios.

Society meetings are held the second Saturday of each month at the Abernethy Grange Hall at 15745 S. Harley Ave. in Oregon City, Oregon. They convene at or about 9:30 AM for the purpose of displaying radios, conducting Society business, and exchanging information. Guests are welcome at all Society meetings and functions (except board meetings).

Other Society functions include guest speakers, auctions, radio shows, and radio sales which are advertised in the Call Letter and are held in and around Portland.

With each issue of the Call Letter, we remember Jim Mason, a charter member of the society who remained active until his death in 1999. A generous bequest from Jim's estate ensures the vitality of the Northwest Vintage Radio Society, and continued publication of the Call Letter.



Society Officers

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On the Cover

Dick Bixler, Silent Key. Photo: Don Copeland

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Announcements

May 2021 meeting - Sat. May.8, 9:30 am - details in email

May 2021 Monthly Feature - Radios with a P in their name

May Tech Talk - None this month

May Tube of the Month - Philco tubes

Leads and Needs - The Swap Shop is for members' classified ads..

Ads are free and can either be permanent or temporary.

Editor's Note - Please have May Call Letter contributions in by Sunday, May 30. Articles & Ads welcome. (Tube labels too).

(No Calendar of Events this month due to cancellations)

Visit our web site at:

www.nwvrs.com

Find us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/nwvrs

President's Message for May 2021

by Pat Kagi

Many thanks to Don Eckis and Christian Winfield for participating in the spring clean-up at the Abernethy Grange on Saturday, April 10th.

Hopefully by now everyone has received their 2nd Covid-19 vaccine shot. We will have some more events coming up soon and maybe even a summer picnic.

Many thanks to those who helped out in the Saturday, April 24th auction for the Jorgenson and Hunker estates. Everyone there seem to have a great time and there were some good bargains.

There will be the annual spring radio sale in Aurora, on Saturday, May 15th 2021. Please contact Robbie Robinson for further details.

We will have a special radio sale for members only! This will be the first time that the tubes, grill cloth and a host of other items will be for sale for the first time! There will be a 20% discount for all of the radios. Sale will be at the McCrackens on June 5th in Crawdfordsville.

Thanks and take care, Pat

VP's Message for May 2021

by Franklin Terry Ouchida

Monthly Features – Radios start with a “P”

Please let me know if you are interested in doing a Tech Talk over Zoom! Share your Knowledge with the Club!

Zoom meeting Saturday May 8, 2021 at 9:30

Anyone without email access that would like a phone call with urgent NWVRS information. Please contact me by phone to be put on a call list.

Join us every Wednesday at 7:00 pm for WRNZ on Zoom for a radio chat session! It's just some thoughts. Franklin Terry Ouchida

NWVRS Meeting Minutes - April 10, 2021

Recorded by Secretary Liles Garcia

President Pat Kagi called the meeting to order at 9:30 AM. Dave Weiss has been injured in a bicycle accident. Robbie Robinson has been ill. Get well quick wishes to both members!!! We will have a sale/auction at the Grange Hall on April 24 and a swap meet/sale in Aurora on May 16.

Pat needs a location for storing our extension cords. Dick Dielschneider has a TV input connector for the person who needed one. Kyle Magness told the group about the OSU Ham Radio Club and their activities.

The Monthly Feature is “Radios With an ‘O’ in Their Name.” Larry Tobkins showed the group an Optimus transistor radio. He also has an Optonica radio.

Dan Howard has an Oregon Department of Forestry radio. Dick Howard showed an Ozarka “Viking” radio. The Tube of the Month” was the ‘01A.

Mike McCrow told the group about this tube. It is a triode introduced in 1922 and was used in battery sets.

Franklin invited everyone to WRNZ on Wednesday evenings at 7:00 PM. The minutes for the March meeting were approved as published in the April Call Letter. The meeting was adjourned.

Tube of the Month: Philco vacuum tubes

By Mike McCrow

Philco began manufacturing consumer radios around 1928. They began marketing Philco tubes that were primarily built by Hygrade-Sylvania. They not only marketed tubes for their own radios, but also sold tubes that preceded their involvement in electronics. Examples are 10A's, X-99's, 81's and so on.

Sylvania developed octal based glass tubes in 1935 at the request of Philco. There was fierce competition with RCA and the "G" and later "GT" were in direct response to the RCA metal tubes. Philco never installed the metal tubes in any of their radios. They did at some point sell metal tubes, only for replacements in radios made by other companies. Along with the metal tubes Philco never used "eye" tubes in any of their radios.

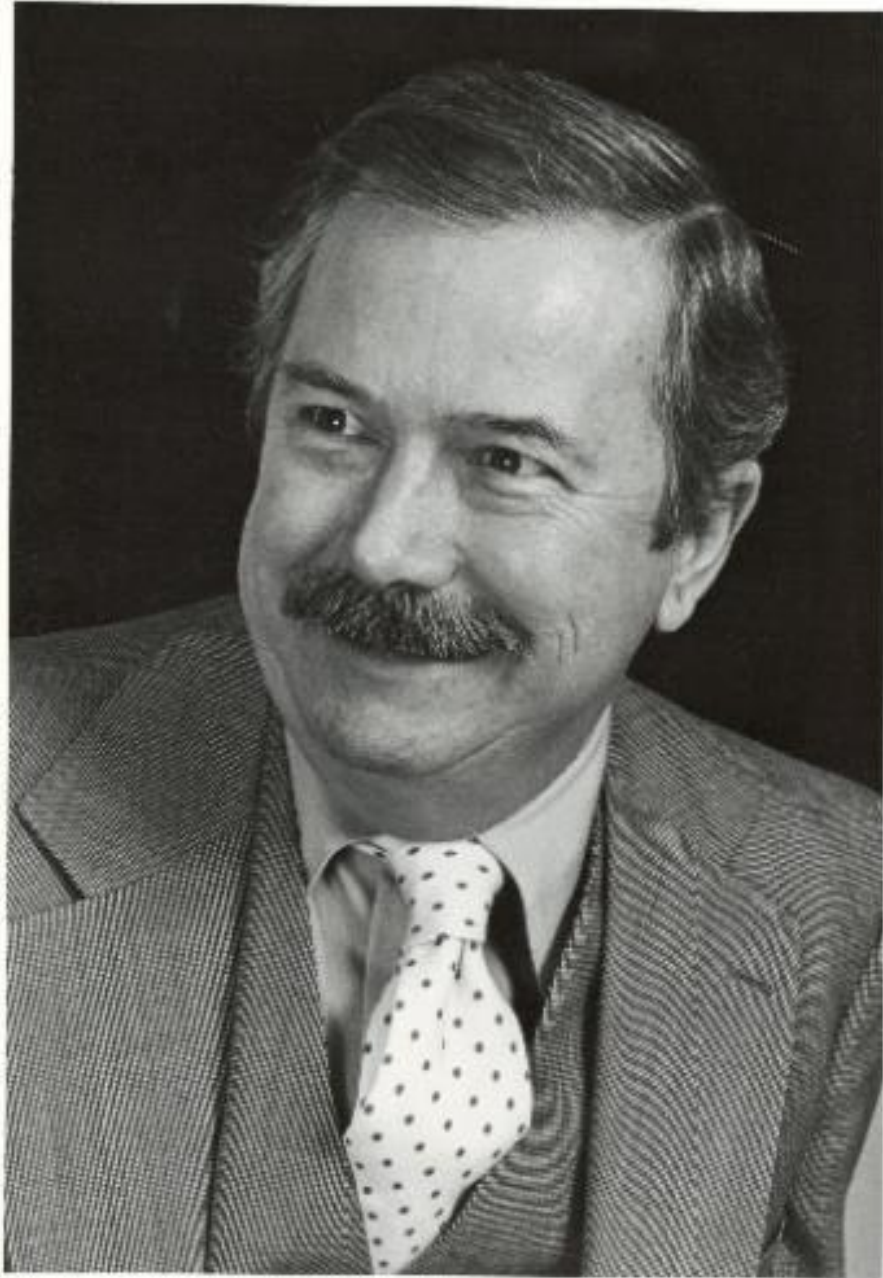
In 1938 Sylvania offered the loctal tube for the first time under the Philco brand, again because they refused to use the RCA developed metal tubes. It was an all-out feud with RCA, and David Sarnoff, who was despised by Philco. The benefits of the loctal tubes were that they locked into the sockets and would not fall out as easily as the octal type. This was beneficial in applications such as car radios. Or where the tubes are installed horizontally. Another benefit is that the pins go straight into the glass, then the metal.

You can find combinations of tube types in their lineups. Octals with loctals and five and six pin types in the same radio. Later they would combine miniatures with other types as well.

Philco had a controlling interest in National Union acquired in 1940. They purchased the Lansdale plant.

By the early 1960's Philco was fading fast. Losing 4 million in 1961. That year they sold out to the Ford motor company. They continued making car radios for Ford, consumer products, and TV sets. Tube manufacture fell off with the onset of the transistor age. Philco was sold again to GTE in 1974, then to Philips in 1981. The Philco name had nearly disappeared, only to be revitalized in recent years with products made overseas.

Richard Bixler, 1926-2021
by Dick Karman



Past President and good friend Dick Bixler passed away on April 5, 2021. He was 94 years old. We offer this tribute to the man and his memory.

His given name was Richard Morgan Bixler. He was born on the last day of December in 1926 and grew up in Portland during the depression. Little is known of his military service during the years of 1944 to 1947. He went on to attend Oregon State College after the war. While at OSC the yearbooks tell us Dick was on the Varsity Rowing team for all four years (1948 to 1951). Through the 1950s and early 1960s Dick used his winning personality to build skills in “professional sales.”

In the mid-1960s Dick settled down to the position of Retail Advertising Manager for the Oregonian Newspaper. He became a fixture at the newspaper office. He was known by his nickname “Bix” which may have been inspired by Leon Bismark Beiderbecke who had made the nickname “Bix” popular in the 1920s and 30s. The Oregonian Obituary said, “Bix was well known and well loved. During his tenure as Retail Advertising Manager [at the Oregonian] he successfully guided his department through key periods of technological innovation and competitive challenge. This, while also guiding careers and providing effective leadership with a “human touch” to all who served under him.” Bob Aman, who was a client of Dicks’ said “We did business with Dick for many years. He was a delight. Knowledgeable, honest and always doing what was in **our** best interest. A consummate ‘Pro’.” Dick retired from his post at the Oregonian in 1989.

Amateur Radio was another part of Dick’s life. HAM records tell us that Dick got his first license in about 1965. He progress from Novice to Advanced operator and was very active in the ARRL. Whatever Dick did, Dick did well. He confirmed two-way contacts with more than 100 countries, earning the ARRL's DXCC award. Mixing his pastimes, Dick repaired and rebuilt Ham radios

as part of his “radio hobby” and always proud of the call sign WA7DKF.

In 1996 Dick returned to advertising account management for the Hillsboro Argus for a few years. It was about that time that Dick became active in the NWVRS. As noted in the club newsletter, Dick volunteered to take pictures at 1995 Swap Meet. (We must not have known him very well because we referred to him as Richard Bixler.) It was also reported that Dick was preparing an article about the May 1996 Swap Meet (Call Letter April, 1996) but it was not recorded whom the article was for. I don’t know how many folks drew the parallel, but a full-page spread on radio collecting that appeared in the Oregonian in May was probably the best advertisement the club could have gotten for the organization and for the May Swap Meet.

According to Myron White, then Swap Meet organizer, it [swap meet] was the biggest success in recent memory. He said that the story that ran in the Oregonian gets the kudos. The story did not mention Dick Bixler, but it did credit Dick Dielschneider who provided an interview and photographs of his collection. That full page story did more to draw attention to our organization than any amount of paid advertising. Yes, Dick Bixler knew the business and knew how to help our organization.

Dick was active in the many roles of the Society. He helped with event promotion, and sought ways to strengthen the group from within. Dan Howard remembers him as a mentor, “He was a very wise man, and a mentor. I remember him coaching me to stand in front of my table at the swap meets so as to better engage with potential customers.” Liles Garcia adds, “Dick was a special person and a good friend.”

Dick didn't slow down. When Dick was 80 years old, he accepted the nomination for Society Vice President, and held that office for three years. It was during those years that he jovially referred to himself as the "President of Vice." When George Kirkwood stepped down in 2010 Dick accepted the office of President and steered the "ship of state" for two more years. It was recognized by all that Dick was one of the friendliest members (and officers) that the society has seen in recent years.

We should mention that Dick loved the outdoors. He rowed in college, and fought fire for the Forest Service in the summers. For most of his life he maintained a cabin on Mt. Hood to enjoy with his wife, his children, and eventually his eleven grandchildren. (I wonder if that elevation helped his DXing.)

Dick and your author often talked about collecting. In his later years he was heard to say that he collected microphones and telegraph keys because they were so much easier to display than radios. We exchanged Portland history stories. We also spoke about advertising the club events. Dick made barter agreements with broadcast outlets. He taught us how one print ad is worth several broadcast ads by secondary exposure (that is folks other than the original recipient, seeing the print publication). Dick arranged very advantageous agreements with commercial broadcast outlets. No one since Dick has been as successful. He also arranged promotion through print advertisement like the Hillsboro Argus, and small neighborhood newspapers.

As the train of life moves on, we are forced to leave another friend behind. But though we will miss Dick, we should always remember the great things he did for the society and for his fellow collectors.

In Memory of NVRs Charter Member Don Hunker (1937-2021) by Dan Howard

Don Hunker was born in Faulkton, South Dakota but lived most of his life in Washington County, Oregon. Following graduation from Hillsboro High School in 1955, and a hitch in the Navy, he met Jeanne Ann Delplanche and they were married at Visitation Catholic Church in Verboort in 1962. Jeanne passed away in 1984. Six years later Don married a longtime friend, Darlene (Delker) Adams. Darlene passed away in 1999. Don Hunker passed away on March 17, 2021.

Don worked various jobs until 1962 when he was hired as a general supervisor for Code-A-Phone, a manufacturer of telephone answering machines. In the mid 1970's, he was hired by Rodgers Organ in Hillsboro and worked there until deciding to pursue his passion for gunsmithing. Don opened the Powder Horn in Hillsboro March 17th, 1978, reportedly financing the business by selling seventy vintage radios from his collection. In the late 1990's, Don moved the Powder Horn to Forest Grove where he operated it until his retirement in 2010.

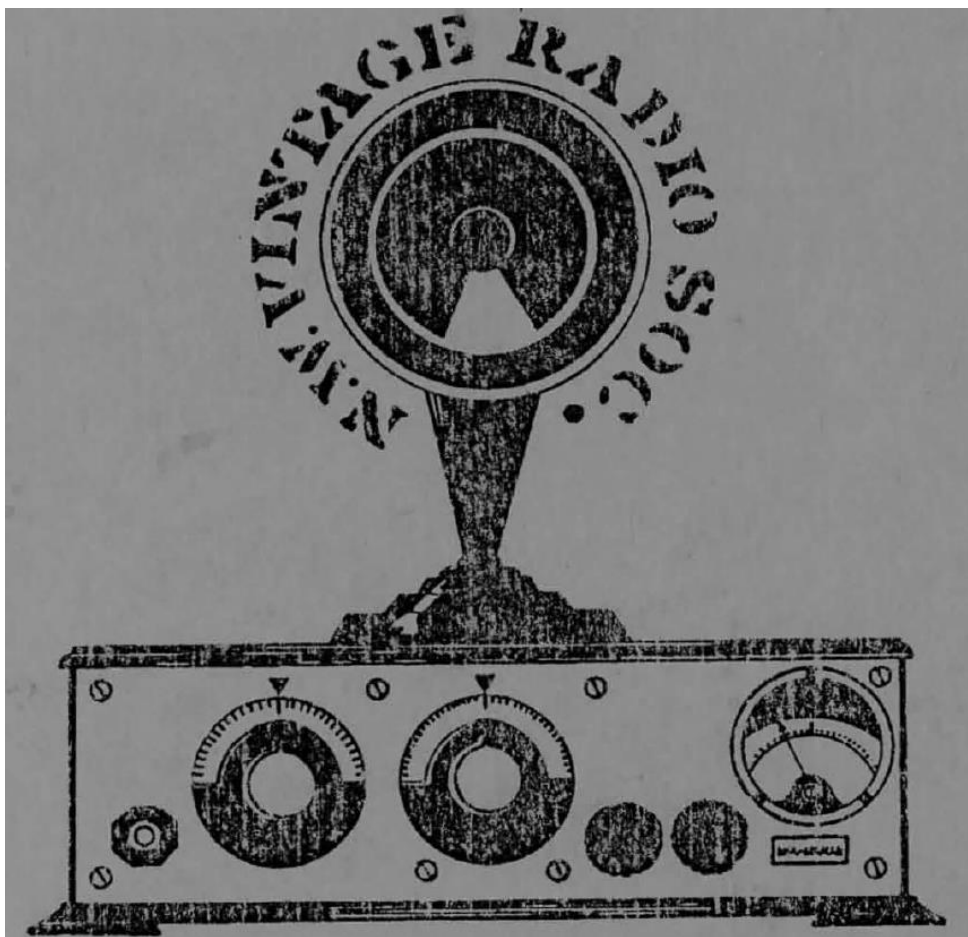
While at Code-A-Phone, Don met and befriended Pete Young who got Don interested in collecting vintage radios. Both Pete and Don were in attendance when the NVRs was organized at the end of 1974 and are numbered among the Society's charter members. Don's interest in radio, and his innate ability to repair things, eventually lead him into repairing and restoring radios for local car collectors.

As his gunsmithing work picked up in the late 1970's, and his interests shifted, Don let his NVRs membership lapse. However, he continued to be a friend of the Society and his contributions live on to this day.



Our Logo

Don Hunker designed the Society's first logo (shown below) while working with Pete Young at Code-A-Phone. The original logo, with the speaker in the center, was short-lived, being replaced in June 1975 by the current design with the same radio but showing horn speaker to the left.



The Hunker-dyne

The radio pictured on the NVRS logo resembles many of the battery-operated designs produced in the mid-1920s. However, this set never actually existed; Don Hunker “imagineered” what he thought would make a great looking radio for the Society’s logo and drew it on vellum with a sharpie. Due to the design’s popularity, in June 1981 the members decided that the radio should actually be built and serve as a permanent club mascot.

Tom James, an experienced builder, volunteered to shepherd the logo radio project. Tom figured out a schematic that would follow the design of the panel and produced a list of needed parts. A dozen members¹ donated the parts and Tom finished the chassis in 1982. The project featured top-quality square bus-bar wiring and beautiful vintage parts and, most-importantly, it matched Don’s design and it worked! When asked what the yet-unnamed set should be called, Tom replied that it should be called a “Hunker” in honor of its designer.

Following Tom James’s untimely death in 1984, Jim Mason looked after Hunker chassis but, at this point, the set lacked a cabinet and the horn speaker was unfinished. In 1992, Gordon Phillips took the initiative to complete a cabinet for the set and also finished a matching horn speaker for the re-christened “Hunker-dyne.”

In 1993, the Hunker-dyne was finished and Don Hunker was invited to be the guest of honor for the unveiling at the Society’s February meeting.

Sources:

“In Loving Memory of Donald Dean Hunker 1937-2021” courtesy Stephan Hunker

Karman, Dick, “The Story of our Logo” *The Call Letter* April 2014 pp. 12-13.

Kent, Charlie, “Tuned Into Don Hunker” *The Call Letter* April 2014 pg .14.

Northwest Vintage Radio Society Archives.

¹ The April 2014 Call Letter lists the members and their contributions.

**Don Hunker at the unveiling of the NVRS mascot the
“Hunker-dyne” Feb, 1993.**



Swap Shop

Ads are free and can be permanent, or 3-month, with an asterisk added each month for tracking. Contact editor to extend.

Please contact the following members to be trained in Radio Repair:

Jan and Glenn Anderson	425 750 7600	Longview
Bruce Baur	503 708-4537	Milwaukee
Blake Dietze	360 944-7172	Vancouver
Mike McCrow	503 730-4639	Aloha
Ed Tompkins	360 573-3895	Vancouver

WANTED: Radios made in Oregon. I do have some to trade. Thanks in advance. Dick Howard (503) 775-6697 dhoward27@comcast.net

FOR SALE: B.F. Goodrich Model R459 AM + SW (big console) \$20. Also a Philco Model 20 Table Top for \$70 and a Silvertone Model 6074 1930 Tabletop \$50. Have a good day. Call Robbie Robinson 503 810 0565

Hi everyone. I am in need of a meter lens for a Heathkit IM-32 VTVM. Parts instrument, or meter with lens. Thanks. Mike McCrow 503-7304639

I collect and restore record players / phonographs with tubes, any and all table tops, portables, even Consoles! If you have one with tubes that is in your way, and that you would like to get rid of or sell cheaply, please get in touch with me. I also will repair or restore yours if you need help in that way. Email me a picture, or give me a call. Thanks! John Livingston 503-708-2987

Military radios: 2 ea. R392 receivers, 2 ea. R662 transceivers, 1 ea. AM3349 400 watt RF amplifier. Complete but untested and came from the estate of a very active local ham. Lots of cables and manuals too. \$1200 for everything. Tektronix 575 curve tracer. Includes the high voltage testing mod and Tek cart and original manual. Does not power on - no further troubleshooting has been done. - \$350 Bill Holeman bpasok@live.com

For sale: Edison Chalet diamond disc wind up phonograph. Works well and is fairly uncommon to find. \$125.00

Victor Victrola Model IX wind up phonograph works well & in nice shape. \$150.00

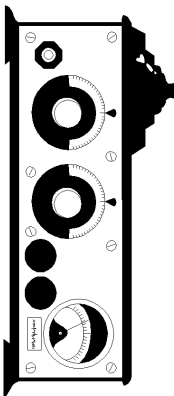
Unidyne B 515SB-G18 microphone. Condition unknown. \$10.00

Old horn speaker and base. No guts inside but looks real neat. \$15.00

Pics available. Contact Pat at patkagi@yahoo.com Thanks, Pat



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